

HAMMOND-SAYRE

HAMMOND-SAYRE

CONTROVERSY.

376.

1889.





WASHINGTON, D. C., *August 19, 1889.*

To Dr. LEWIS A. SAYRE :

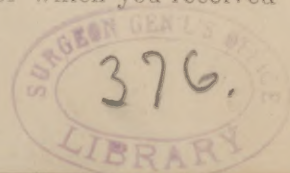
A few days since you asserted to a newspaper reporter that I am making \$1,000 a week out of the so-called Dr. Brown-Sequard "Elixir of Life." You did this without the least evidence in support of the statement, and with that moral recklessness which is so prominent a feature of your character. It originated entirely in your own debased and dishonorable mind. You knew how you would act under similar circumstances, and you affected to believe that I would be equally as low as you are. You knew at the time that you were uttering a wilful, malignant, and deliberate lie. I have not made, nor do I expect to make, directly or indirectly, as much as one cent from the so-called "Elixir."

You undertook to denounce the experiments I am making as though you knew something about them. Every physician acquainted with your scientific status is aware that your knowledge of physiology and pathology is small enough to disgrace an embryo medical student, and that you are utterly incapable of giving an intelligent opinion upon any subject requiring grave thought and deliberation.

You are also pleased to express your opinion of me in such ungentlemanly and unprofessional language that were it worth the while I should bring you to the bar of a court of justice or inflict such personal chastisement upon you as your malignancy and falsehood so well deserve. It is thoroughly known, however, that abuse from you is no slander. The filthiness of your speech, even in ordinary conversation, is such that ladies, to my knowledge, have left your presence in disgust, and have refused to hold further professional communication with you, while your habitual brutality of manner and cruelty have become by-words with the profession and the public of New York. As to horse-whipping you, I am afraid that not even that satisfaction is left to me. You are so broken down mentally and physically by your vicious course of life that the public, whose good opinion I believe I possess, might regard me as taking an undue advantage of your infirmities.

I a "fraud," pronounced so by Lewis A. Sayre, whose name is a synonym for all that is false and unprofessional! How often have you stolen patients from other physicians? So frequently, that consultations with you are dangerous, for it is well known that you will endeavor so to ingratiate yourself with the patient by your pretensions and vauntings that the family physician is cast into the shade and the case goes into your hands—that is, it used to go into your hands when your brother physicians called you in consultation. They have learned to avoid you as an honest man avoids a thief.

A "fraud!" Do you remember some of the many fraudulent and unnecessary operations you have performed upon helpless children for manifestly incurable diseases, and for which you received





grossly exorbitant fees? Have you forgotten poor little Harry Norman, whom you cruelly mutilated and then had the unblushing impudence to report the case as cured, when your operation, as I showed to the American Neurological Association from the testimony of the father and the exhibition of the patient, had not only been useless, but had aggravated the disease from which the child suffered? Can you not bring to your mind, in some of its less obfuscated moments, if such there be, the case of the son of the Brooklyn clergyman, whom you heartlessly cut with your knife when the little fellow was suffering from an organic disease of the spinal cord absolutely incurable? Have you forgotten the suit for malpractice which a poor and indignant father brought against you for injuries which, in your ignorance of anatomy and surgery, you inflicted upon his son? It is true you managed to throw sufficient doubt about the matter as to warrant a jury in acquitting you, but one of the most distinguished surgeons of this or any other country testified that you had opened the hip joint and had made the boy a hopeless cripple for life.

Why, your whole life has been one of fraud! Think of the way in which your unfortunate creditors suffered from your bankruptcy when you were forced into court on supplementary proceedings, and when you swore that you had no property and no income and that your wife received the proceeds of your practice and allowed you a weekly stipend for your board and clothes.

Think of the fact that the books that have appeared under your name were composed by men whom you hired for the purpose, and that you are incapable of writing good English, not only on medical subjects, but on any subject whatever.

You say in the interview to which I refer, that you echo the opinion expressed in regard to me by one of your Philadelphia confreres. Immediately on seeing the alleged statement, I wrote to Dr. Mears asking if he had made any such assertion as he was reported to have made. In answer I received the following letter:

"1429 WALNUT STREET,

"PHILADELPHIA, August 6th, 1889.

"DEAR SIR:

"I am just in receipt of your letter of the 2d instant, enclosing a slip cut from the Philadelphia *Times*, and you ask whether this is authentic or not. It is not authentic. I deem it just to you, as to myself, to state that immediately on my attention being called to the statement referred to, I called on the editor of the *Times* and requested him to make a proper correction.

"I enclose herewith a slip cut from the *Times* of the next morning, the 3d instant.

"I need not assure you that I greatly regret the publication to which you refer.

"Very respectfully,

"Your obedient servant,

"I. EWING MEARS.

"Dr. W. A. HAMMOND,

"Washington, D. C."



The following is the extract from the Philadelphia *Times* to which Dr. Mears refers :

"Injustice was done to both Dr. Mears and to Dr. Hammond by a misconception of Dr. Mears' statement relative to Dr. Brown-Sequard's theory of the elixir of life. Dr. Mears was reported as saying that 'Dr. Hammond, as is known in his profession, is a fraud,' when what he said was : 'If Dr. Hammond advocated the Brown-Sequard theory he advocated a scientific fraud.'

"The misconception of Dr. Mears' statement, as reported, made him appear as offering a direct offense to Dr. Hammond, for whom he cherishes great respect, as does the medical profession, and the correction is made as a matter of justice to both parties."

It is scarcely necessary to say anything more on this point. Dr. Mears is a gentleman ; you are not.

You have always been noted for unscrupulousness and malignancy, but as you grow older these traits become more pronounced in you. Doubtless, this fact is in great part due to the circumstance that your practice has almost entirely vanished. Abler and better men, such as Shaffer, Gibney, Roberts, Phelps, and others, whom you have systematically affected to contemn and underrate, have come to the front and have cast you into the background. Your mind is too small to tolerate an honorable rivalry.

I told you once, as you will probably recollect, that there was too much glass in your house for you to venture to throw stones, and that if you did not keep a decent tongue in your head, so far as I was concerned, it would be bad for you. I think you will admit that my warning was timely, and that I have fulfilled my promise.

WILLIAM A. HAMMOND.

1  
The first of June  
Sunday, Aug. 25. 1878



New York Herald  
Sunday, Aug. 25, 89.

## VIRULENT EFFECTS OF THE ELIXIR.

Dr. William A. Hammond Adminis-  
ters Abuse to Dr. Lewis A. Sayre  
in Allopathic Doses.

## NEUROLOGICAL VENOM VERSUS ORTHOPEDIC ANIMOSITY.

Subcuticular Applications of "Fraud"  
and "Liar," with Equal Parts of  
"Malpractice" and "Deception" in a  
Saturated Solution of Professional  
Jealousy and Personal Spite.

## "WHO SHALL DECIDE WHEN DOCTORS DISAGREE?"

—Pope.

In this Case the Documents Are in Evidence  
and They Are "Mighty Interestin' Read-  
ing," if Not Edifying.

That peculiar condition of things so vaguely ex-  
pressed by the phrase "when doctors disagree"  
seems to have been reached in the controversy over  
the Brown-Séquard elixir of life. By no means the  
least interesting incident in the sensational ex-  
periments and experiences with the elixir is the  
violent attack made by Dr. William A. Hammond,  
of Washington, on Dr. Lewis A. Sayre, of this city.

A circular is being mailed at Washington contain-  
ing an open letter addressed to Dr. Sayre, over the  
name of Dr. Hammond, which is a perfect torrent  
of Billingsgate. It is sent in unsealed envelopes to  
the members of the medical profession and others.  
How the medical fraternity will receive it remains  
to be seen. Both men have world wide reputations.  
That makes the attack all the more notable. The  
ethics of the profession seem to have been some-  
what strained.

### THE PROVOCATION.

The circular is dated Washington, D. C., August  
19, 1889, and runs in this way:—

"A few days since you asserted to a newspaper  
reporter that I am making \$1,000 a week out of the  
so-called Dr. Brown-Séquard 'elixir of life.' You  
did this without the least evidence in support of  
the statement, and with that moral recklessness  
which is so prominent a feature of your character.  
It originated entirely in your own debased and dis-  
honorable mind. You knew how you would act un-  
der similar circumstances, and you affected to be-  
lieve that I would be equally as low as you are. You  
knew at the time that you were uttering a wilful,  
malignant and deliberate lie. I have not made, nor  
do I expect to make, directly or indirectly, as much  
as one cent from the so-called 'elixir.'

"You undertook to denounce the experiments I  
am making as though you knew something about  
them. Every physician acquainted with your  
scientific status is aware that your knowledge of  
physiology and pathology is small enough to dis-  
grace an embryo medical student, and that you are  
utterly incapable of giving an intelligent opinion  
upon any subject requiring grave thought and de-  
liberation.

"You are also pleased to express your opinion of  
me in such ungentlemanly and unprofessional lan-  
guage that were it worth the while I should bring  
you to the bar of a court of justice or inflict such  
personal chastisement upon you as your malignancy  
and falsehood so well deserve. It is thoroughly  
known, however, that abuse from you is no slan-  
der. The filthiness of your speech, even in ordi-  
nary conversation, is such that ladies, to my  
knowledge, have left your presence in disgust, and  
have refused to hold further professional communi-  
cation with you, while your habitual brutality of  
manner and cruelty have become bywords with the  
profession and the public of New York. As to  
horsewhipping you, I am afraid that not even that  
satisfaction is left to me. You are so broken down  
mentally and physically by your vicious course of  
life that the public, whose good opinion I believe I  
possess, might regard me as taking an undue ad-  
vantage of your infirmities.

### PAYING HIS RESPECTS.

"I a 'fraud,' pronounced so by Lewis A. Sayre,  
whose name is a synonyme for all that is false and  
unprofessional! How often have you stolen pa-  
tients from other physicians? So frequently that  
consultations with you are dangerous, for it is well  
known that you will endeavor to so ingratiate your-  
self with the patient by your pretensions and  
vauntings that the family physician is cast into the  
shade and the case goes into your hands—that is, it  
used to go into your hands when your brother  
physicians called you in consultation. They have  
learned to avoid you as an honest man avoids a  
thief.

"A 'fraud!' Do you remember some of the many  
fraudulent and unnecessary operations you have  
performed upon helpless children for manifestly  
incurable diseases, and for which you received  
grossly exorbitant fees?

### MALPRACTICE CHARGED.

"Have you forgotten poor little Harry Norman,  
whom you cruelly mutilated and then had the un-  
blushing impudence to report the case as cured,  
when your operation, as I showed to the American  
Neurological Association from the testimony of the  
father and the exhibition of the patient, had not  
only been useless, but had aggravated the disease  
from which the child suffered?

"Can you not bring to your mind in some of its  
less obfuscated moments, if such there be, the case  
of the son of the Brooklyn clergyman whom you  
heartlessly cut with your knife when the little fel-  
low was suffering from an organic disease of the  
spinal cord absolutely incurable? Have you for-  
gotten the suit for malpractice which a poor and in-  
dignant father brought against you for injuries  
which, in your ignorance of anatomy and surgery,  
you inflicted upon his son? Is it true you managed  
to throw sufficient doubt about the matter as to  
warrant a jury in acquitting you, but one of the  
most distinguished surgeons of this or any other  
country testified that you had opened the hip joint  
and made the boy a hopeless cripple for life.

"Why, your whole life has been one of fraud! Think  
of the way in which your unfortunate credi-  
tors suffered from your bankruptcy, when you were  
forced into court on supplementary proceedings, and  
when you swore that you had no property and no  
income and that your wife received the proceeds  
of your practice and allowed you a weekly stipend  
for your board and clothes.

"Think of the fact that the books that have ap-  
peared under your name were composed by men  
whom you hired for the purpose, and that you are  
incapable of writing good English, not only on  
medical subjects, but on any subject whatever.

### MORE VENOM.

"You have always been noted for unscrupulous-  
ness and malignancy, but as you grow older these  
traits become more pronounced in you. Doubtless  
this fact is in great part due to the circumstance  
that your practice has almost entirely vanished.  
Ablie and better men, such as Shaffer, Gibney,  
Roberts, Phelps and others, whom you have sys-  
tematically affected to condemn and underrate,  
have come to the front and have cast you into the  
background. Your mind is too small to tolerate an  
honorable rivalry.

"I told you once, as you will probably recollect,  
that there was too much glass in your house for  
you to venture to throw stones, and that if you did  
not keep a decent tongue in your head so far as I  
was concerned it would be bad for you. I think  
you will admit that my warning was timely, and  
that I have fulfilled my promise."

### DR. SAYRE LAUGHS AT THE SCREED.

I found Dr. Sayre yesterday afternoon in his  
operating room in the Thirtieth street extension of  
his residence, No. 285 Fifth avenue. He had just  
been superintending an operation conducted by his  
son. Dr. Sayre had not seen the diatribe of Dr.  
Hammond until I showed him a copy of it and he  
told me he had not even heard of it. He read it  
aloud and commented upon it passage by passage.  
The Doctor treated the whole thing in a rather jocular  
way and did not appear at all disturbed by the  
attack.

"Poor fellow!" was a frequent exclamation with  
him as he read on. "He has a perfect right to  
hold any opinion of me that he wishes," said Dr.  
Sayre at last. "His judgment of me does not in  
the slightest degree affect me, nor do I care what  
he thinks.

"I never made any such statement as he refers  
to at the start," continued Dr. Sayre. "I don't care  
whether he makes a cent or a million out of the  
elixir. The nearest I ever came to saying anything  
like it was that if I wanted to go into this business  
myself I was satisfied I could make \$1,000 a week,  
or \$1,000 a day for that matter, because there are  
so many old men who would want to be made young  
and would be willing to pay for it.

"I did not think it right to go ahead and make ex-  
periments with the elixir, as Hammond did, on the  
strength of what the newspapers said. The proper

## NEW YORK

thing to do was to wait until a scientific investiga-  
tion had been made and a report given on it. Then  
it was time enough for physicians to try it. They  
should have had the opinion of some such man as  
Dr. Loomis, who has just made a report.

"But Hammond jumped into the thing at the  
start and commenced to tell of the wonderful  
things he had done. He wanted to make all the  
capital out of it he could.

### DOUBTS HAMMOND'S WORD.

"I don't think he has ever seen in any newspaper  
a statement representing that I said any such thing  
about him. I have received clippings from all over  
the country regarding my views, but have seen  
nothing of the sort and do not believe he has  
either.

"I ought to feel grateful to Hammond for letting  
me alone. If I have injured him or done anything  
to him why don't he take the law on me and come  
and give me a licking? I don't need any of his sym-  
pathy or pity. If he thinks my practice is falling  
off let him come and attend to it for a few days and  
he will find that I have all I can do.

"As for my not being called in consultation, that  
is all nonsense. I have had two consultations al-  
ready to-day and am called for two more this after-  
noon. But such things as this cannot injure me,  
and I don't care what a man like Hammond says  
anyway.

"It was not I who called Hammond a fraud. Was  
he not so pronounced by the United States govern-  
ment when he was court-martialed and dismissed  
from the army? It is not necessary for me or any-  
body else to say anything about him, for he is well  
enough known.

"But he has made some positive misstatements  
and he ought to know it. I never saw such a man as  
Hammond. Do I know Harry Norman? Well, I  
should say I did. His father lived over in Green-  
point and brought the boy over to see me. I told  
him what ought to be done, and he went home and  
got a druggist or somebody else to do what I had  
advised. He made a bad business of it.

### DIDN'T GET A FAIR SHOW.

"Afterward I performed an operation on the boy,  
but before the wounds healed Hammond took him  
down before the Neurological Society. He did not  
exhibit the case properly there, as I can prove. I  
have letters in my possession from Mr. Norman  
thanking me for what I had done and saying it was  
all right.

"I am glad Hammond has brought up that mal-  
practice case, for I have the documentary evidence  
to prove that I was in the right and was imposed  
upon, and in fighting the case was congratulated by  
some of the most eminent men in the profession  
and thanked for doing a great service to the pro-  
fession. At the request of the late Dr. S. W. Gross,  
of Philadelphia, and the late Dr. Dixie Crosby I had  
published a history of the case, with all the evi-  
dence, court proceedings and other matters pertain-  
ing to it. Their letters, which were highly  
complimentary, appear in the volume, which was  
circulated extensively.

"The facts are briefly these:—While examining a  
patient in my private office on April 2, 1868, my as-  
sistant brought in a poor woman with a girl—not a  
boy as Hammond says—about seven years old. Dr.  
Gross and Dr. Nettel, of this city, happened to be  
there, and saw the case and the operation. The  
child had an immense abscess on the outside of the  
hip. The joint was not opened, but I opened the  
abscess and took out a pint of pus.

"What I did was indorsed by those present,  
among whom, I think, was also Dr. Sims. I never  
received a cent for the operation and did not see  
the child afterward. Her father, John F. Walsh,  
was induced to bring a suit against me for \$20,000  
damages by one Edwin James, Queen's Counsel, who  
had been turned out of England.

"They afterward wanted to settle for \$250, and I  
could have got out of the case for that any time.  
But I did not propose to stand that sort of busi-  
ness, and after repeated efforts finally got the case  
to trial. I petitioned for a personal inspection of  
the child to find out what injury, if any, had been  
inflicted. That was resisted, but I persisted and  
Judge Jones rendered an opinion sustaining me.

### BENEFIT TO THE PROFESSION.

"This point was of incalculable benefit to the med-  
ical profession and gave great protection against  
injustice to its members. I felt compensated by  
this for the personal annoyance and expense to  
which I had been put. Drs. William H. Van Buren,  
Frank H. Hamilton and Ernest Krackowizer were  
the surgical experts appointed by the Court who  
made the examination of the child. Their report  
showed that the claim made against me was un-  
founded, and the verdict was in my favor, with  
costs. That is all there is to the case.

"The surgeon to whom Hammond refers was the  
late Dr. Willard Parker. I do not care to say any-  
thing against his name, but it was shown that he  
was deceived, and some unfavorable criticism was  
made against him for his attitude toward me in the  
matter.



"Concerning my financial affairs, all I have to say is that I do not owe a dollar in the world to-day. While I was sick I was a fool to go into Wall street, and lost a large amount of money. No act of dishonor was ever claimed against me, even by those to whom I owed the most. Everything was satisfactorily settled up."

"My books are in the language I use. Dr. Carpenter took stenographic reports of my lectures just as I talked, and they were published. I don't pretend to be a classical scholar, but what I say seems to be generally understood."

#### HIS COMPLIMENTS TO HAMMOND.

"As for Hammond, it would be better for him to keep quiet. His methods are too well known to be commented upon by me. Some years ago a gentleman was sent here from the South with a letter to Hammond to be treated for nervousness. He looked in the man's eye and said he saw a bone in his brain which needed to be removed. The patient was assured that if the operation was performed he would be all right again. He consented to have it done."

"Hammond pretended to do it and gave the man a small piece of bone which he said had been taken out. The man's head was fixed up and he was jubilant and said he had never felt better in his life."

"Wall street rang with praises of Hammond, for the man was well known. He was a relative of Mr. Woodward, the partner of Mr. C. C. Baldwin, and the case naturally attracted attention. Before the war he had been rich and I think was a judge. But he could not become reconciled to the changes the war brought about and to see his liberated slaves judges in the Supreme Court. He became melancholy and his mind was disturbed. However, he went home after Hammond got through with him and believed himself cured. But three weeks after that he grew worse than before, and was put in an asylum and died in a short while."

"Then the doctors who doubted Hammond insisted on having a post-mortem examination made. It was found that there had never been any incision made in the skull at all. Merely a few scratches had been made on the skin and no bone had been taken out at all."

#### ONLY CHICKEN BONE.

"The piece of bone which Hammond had told the man had been removed from the brain was found and it turned out to be a piece of chicken bone."

"The dead man's friends were very indignant against Hammond. He had made what they thought was an exorbitant charge for the operation. I don't remember how much it was, but think it was at least \$1,000 or \$1,500. They came to see me about it to get my opinion. I told them that operations had been performed in cases of epilepsy similar to what Hammond had claimed to have done, and that it was a delicate thing to do. So long as they had made a lot of money in speculations in cotton I did not see why they ought to complain about paying the money."

#### PART OF THE DELUSION.

"Hammond's excuse after the exposure was that he had to charge a big fee in order to keep up the delusion. He admitted that the story of the extraction of the bone was all fiction. His explanation was that he knew his patient was suffering from melancholia, and as he was of an argumentative turn of mind it would be necessary to make some practical demonstration of cause and effect, for the treatment was wholly mental."

"Hammond claimed that he had written to the man's doctor after his return home telling all about the chicken bone. This was not believed, for the doctor declared he had never received any such letter or known the circumstances at all until after the deception was discovered."

In conclusion, Dr. Sayre said:—"I don't intend to get into any controversy with Hammond. Neither do I intend to take any notice of his circulars beyond this statement for publication in the HERALD. The more he circulates the circular the worse it will be for him, but I don't know after all as you can injure a man like him."

As I was leaving Dr. Sayre remarked:—"I don't know how they feel about this in Washington, but if the Medical Society there has any honor I should think it would turn Hammond out."

The circular is creating a great stir in medical circles in this city.

N. Y. Herald

Aug. 26. 89

8

## HAMMOND'S SECOND DOSE FOR SAYRE.

### RECIPE:—

Fl. Ex. Rancor,

Tinct. Malice,

Aqua Impura,

Equal Parts.

MISCE, Sig.:—To Be Taken as Often as  
Necessary.

## VIOLENT RECRIMINATION

All His Former Statements Reiterated with Em-  
phasis and Some New Terms of Abuse  
Added—Once They Were Friends  
and Brother Professors.

HERALD BUREAU,  
CORNER FIFTEENTH AND G STREETS, N. W.,  
WASHINGTON, August 25, 1889.

Dr. Hammond uttered an exclamation of con-  
tempt when I called his attention this afternoon to  
the criticisms of Dr. Lewis A. Sayre in to-day's  
HERALD.

"The most that Dr. Sayre says," he remarked, "is  
simply abuse, to which it is impossible to  
reply without uttering other abuse, which  
I do not care to do. The only charge  
that he makes is in regard to an opera-  
tion which he alleges I pretended to perform  
upon a gentleman from the South. The operation  
was performed and consisted in removing a piece  
of decayed bone from the ear; a part of that bone  
is now in my possession. The gentleman had  
paralysis of the face and the paralysis disappeared  
after the removal of the bone."

"He was insane at the time he came under my  
charge. He afterward died in a lunatic asylum,  
and no post-mortem examination of him was ever  
made. I never claimed that I had written to the  
man's physician that I practised a deception upon  
the patient."

#### ONCE MORE THE LIE DIRECT.

"That is all one of Dr. Sayre's falsehoods, for I  
practised no deception, neither did I charge him  
\$1,000, nor \$1,500, nor anything like either of these  
sums. No such man as Dr. Sayre describes was  
ever operated upon by me. The gentleman that I  
operated on was a friend of Mr. Richard T. Wilson,  
and came to me through Mr. Wilson."

"As to the case of little Harry Norman, I cannot  
do better than call attention to an extract from my  
book on 'Diseases of the Nervous System,' where,  
on page 379 of the seventh edition, you will find a  
statement of the case, with a woodcut of the boy.  
The statement is made there that a delicate and un-  
usual operation was performed on the boy by a sur-  
geon. That surgeon was Dr. Sayre, and it is not the  
only case in which he has performed that operation  
unjustifiably."

"Dr. Sayre says that his operation upon the young  
girl was of incalculable benefit to the medical pro-  
fession. If the medical profession can only be  
benefited by laying open the hip joints of young  
children, the sooner the medical profession is not  
benefited the better. Every one knows that  
Sayre's practice is falling off and has fallen off."

"He says he never made any such remark as that  
I was a fraud and was making \$1,000 a week. He  
did make it, and you will find it published in the  
San Francisco Examiner of August 5, as follows:—

#### THE CASE BELLI.

"As for Hammond, he knows better, but as there  
is a cool \$1,000 a week in it for him he will never  
tell. Hammond is a fraud. He knows that by  
adopting this sensational scheme to cheat nature all  
the old men in the country will come to him to be  
made young and he will charge them accordingly.  
He has taken a large contract, but what does he  
care?"

"He put this in a paper where he probably  
thought I would never see it. He never would have  
dared to utter such language if I had been in New  
York."

"Since the publication of my letter, which I have  
taken pains to send to hundreds of physicians all  
through the country, I have received numerous re-  
plies, all of which congratulate me on having ex-  
posed Dr. Lewis A. Sayre's bad qualities."

#### ONCE FRIENDS, NOW—ENEMIES!

"Dr. Sayre and I were at one time very good  
friends. We were brother professors in the same  
medical college, and nobody was higher in his lau-  
dations of me than Sayre was. He changed his  
opinion simply because I resigned from the Belle-  
vue Hospital Medical College and went to the Uni-  
versity of New York as professor. Then Sayre be-  
came an enemy. Then, too, I have had occasion—  
as in the case of Harry Norman—to expose his  
shortcomings."

"The sooner Dr. Sayre stops controversy with me  
the better it will be for him. As to ethics, to which  
he alludes in the closing paragraph of his inter-  
view, the less he says about that the better. If it  
is ethics for one medical man to abuse another to a  
newspaper reporter and tell lies about him, it is not  
the sort of ethics that I have been accustomed to.  
Dr. Sayre should be disciplined for his outrageous  
abuse of me to which I have referred."

N. Y. Herald

Aug. 27. 89

B

## SAYRE'S SCALPEL USED ON HAMMOND.

Falsity, Unprofessional Conduct and Noto-  
riety Grabbing Said To Be a  
Few of His Traits.

"THE WORST SUBJECT I EVER TOUCHED."

Some Particulars Pointed Out to Show that  
Dr. Hammond Purposely Distorted  
Dr. Sayre's Cases.

Not since the days of the late President Garfield's  
illness, when questions of medical ethics and  
methods so agitated the profession, has there been  
anything like the sensation that was caused by the  
violent attack made by Dr. William A. Hammond on  
Dr. Lewis A. Sayre.

The interest is not confined to medical circles,  
for the public generally is concerned on account of  
the world wide reputation of the two men. The  
HERALD was relied upon for all information con-  
cerning this extraordinary affair, because it had  
first and exclusively given the story of the attack  
and the recoil.

"I feel half ashamed of myself for having taken  
any notice of Hammond's abuse of me," said Dr.  
Sayre yesterday. "Nobody can afford to take any  
notice of a man of that stamp. The trouble with  
him is that he is losing his business, as he has al-  
ready lost his self-respect. He is one of those men  
who must have notoriety and can't have honorable  
reputations."

#### FIT FOR THE SEWER ONLY.

"Then the Doctor added in a true apologetic tone:—  
"I regret, though, that I should have contributed  
in any way toward Hammond's making himself any  
more notorious. I was simply astounded when the  
HERALD called my attention to his circular. As I  
said then, it was the first I knew about the existence



of the circular. No doubt I was a little dazed at the man's cheek, and expressed my mind without stopping to think how unwise it was to mix myself up in such a mess.

"Shortly after your call I received a typewritten copy with Hammond's signature attached. If I had seen it before I should have dismissed the whole matter by disposing of it in the sewer, where it properly belonged and to which I consigned my copy.

"No, there is nothing I desire to take back or amend. Hammond has deliberately maligned me and lied about me. What I especially object to is his reference publicly to the cases of private persons. It is a breach of medical honor.

#### THE NORMAN CASE.

"I see from the HERALD that he is still harping on the case of Harry Norman. He has so distorted the facts that I can see no objection in explaining the circumstances. It was clearly a clinical case. The boy had been handed around at different clinics before he came to me. The father of the child had taken him to Hammond and he had telegraphed to Dr. Weir Mitchell to come over from Philadelphia and make an examination with him. They had the boy at Hammond's house one Sunday and decided they could do nothing for him. It was thought best to have a photograph of the boy taken and sent to confreres in Europe in order to get opinions as to what was best to be done. It was a curious case of nervousness.

"Photographer O'Neill remarked when he saw the boy that that was just the sort of case that Dr. Sayre treated, for he had taken a number of pictures of such sufferers. The boy's parents brought him to me and I carried him over to my clinic at Bellevue Hospital and lectured on him. I told the father if he would bring the child to me at the hospital on the following Wednesday, which was operating day, I would do what I could to relieve him. But Mr. Norman wrote me that he could not do so, because he was called to Philadelphia. It seems that his wife had been interested in one of my pamphlets treating of such cases, and could not wait for me. She got someone else to operate on the boy. There was a bad mess of it, and the child was suffering when finally I consented to perform the operation.

"That was early in the summer. In October, I think, at a meeting of the Academy of Medicine I referred to the treatment of such cases, when Hammond surprised me by saying that the method had been shown to be wrong in the case of the Norman boy. He told about his being exhibited before the American Neurological Society and reported that the boy had been greatly injured. That was the first I had heard of it.

"Dr. Carpenter, the stenographer who reported the proceedings before the Neurological Society, informed me that he had been present at the meeting where Hammond brought the boy and said that a fair chance had not been given for examination. I wrote to the boy's father for information, and you can see for yourself how Hammond has twisted the facts."

#### WHAT THE FATHER SAID.

Dr. Sayre handed me a letter out of a number relating to the case which he has preserved. It is signed by A. J. Norman, the boy's father, and this is the most important part of it:

"I feel as though I was showing ingratitude in not seeing you in person and bringing the boy. I shall try to do so next Sunday. I am pleased, in reply to yours of the 23d, to inform you that our boy is in a splendid condition mentally and physically and is gaining in intelligence and strength so rapidly that he has caught up to the average, and if he continues to improve as rapidly will very soon surpass the most forward children of his age."

"In answer to your questions:—First, the date of the meeting of the society was about the middle of the first week in June; second, his clothing was not removed and no examination was made; third, the parts were not fairly healed."

"You see how Hammond persists in misrepresenting me," commented Dr. Sayre. "That is simply because he did not agree with my theory, which has been widely adopted and commented upon. I could refer you to numerous instances where I have received compliments of the highest order for my work in this line."

#### DR. SAYRE'S FIGHT IN THE COURTS.

I called Dr. Sayre's attention to the following statement made by Dr. Hammond to a representative of the HERALD in Washington:—

"Dr. Sayre says that his operation upon the young girl was of incalculable benefit to the medical profession. If the medical profession can only be benefited by laying open the hip joints of young children the sooner the medical profession is not benefited the better."

"Well," remarked Dr. Sayre, "that is only another exhibition of the way he distorts things. The operation itself was not referred to as of 'incalculable benefit' to the profession, but my series was."

The Doctor called my attention to a series of resolutions adopted by the State Medical Society in reference to the case mentioned. Among other things it recites that, "by vigorously forcing this scandalous suit to a trial he secured a judicial decision which established a legal principle of great value to the whole medical profession, and which has been justly characterized as one of the greatest advances in jurisprudence during half a century, and will do much to prevent malicious attacks upon medical men." Thanks were tendered to "Dr. Sayre, whose successful efforts to protect his honor and interests merit a distinct recognition."

Dr. Sayre jocosely suggested that the attack made on him by Dr. Hammond may be explained on the theory that the Brown-Séquard elixir may have gone to the brain of his antagonist.

N.Y. Herald

Aug. 28.89

HERALD BUREAU,  
CORNER FIFTEENTH AND G STREETS, N. Y.,  
WASHINGTON, August 27, 1889.

Dr. Hammond Wants Dr. Sayre to Sue  
Him for Libel.

DR. HAMMOND OFFERS TO STAND A SUIT FOR  
LIBEL BY DR. SAYRE.

Dr. Hammond made a vigorous reply to-night to the last attack made upon him by Dr. Sayre.

"Yes," said the Doctor, "I read it, and the only statement I desire to make in reply is in regard to the case of little Harry Norman, about which Dr. Sayre is so interested. This little boy about four years old was brought to my clinic at the University Medical College in January, 1876. He was apparently in good health, was well grown for his age and had not been subject to any exhausting disease."

"As he sat upon a chair he exhibited no indication of paralysis, spasm or inco-ordination. He moved both legs well and with normal force and could use either hand in the ordinary way. But it was impossible for him to assume the erect posture, and when he attempted to do so he stood in a peculiar one-sided stooping position, the left arm strongly flexed against the side of the chest, while the right was thrown out behind him. He could not maintain himself on his feet without support."

"In walking he was able to direct his steps with a certain amount of precision, but yet not to a normal extent. He appeared also to have difficulty in arresting his movements, and was accordingly apt to come up violently against obstacles which were in his way. His gait was between a run and a walk, and he often fell. In bringing the case before the class I expressed the provisional opinion that it was one of chorea paralytica, but further examination and the inefficacy of all treatment soon caused me to change this view."

#### DR. SAYRE'S OPERATION.

"In May he came under the charge of a 'surgeon,' Dr. Sayre, who circumcised him under the impression that the case was one of reflex inco-ordination. It is scarcely necessary to say that the operation was unsuccessful. When he appeared before the association in June there had been a gradual advance in the intensity of his symptoms. Yet, notwithstanding the marked inco-ordination, there was no paralysis, no derangement of sensibility, no bladder disturbance, no spasm, no deviation of electric excitability of the muscle and none of the peculiar symptoms indicative of sclerosis of any part of the cord. After this there was a short intermission in his symptoms, and his father thought he was recovering. He writes me to that effect September 7, no medicine having been taken."

"But soon afterward he again relapsed, and his condition gradually became worse. When I last saw him, about a year ago, there were nystagmus and a total inability to stand. When he tried to do so he bent over so his head touched the floor, and there he remained, apparently endeavoring to stand on his head. When he wanted to go anywhere in the room he lay down on the floor and rolled toward it, turning over toward the left always. About this time Dr. P. Jewell, of Chicago, saw the patient. Continued examination and study of this very interesting case led me to the opinion that it is one of sclerosis and atrophy of the cerebellum. The father of the boy wrote me a year after the operation was performed and said he was in a worse condition than ever."

#### HE WANTS TO BE SUED.

"The editorial in to-day's HERALD pleased me very much. I will accept its conditions absolutely. If what I said in my letter to Sayre is not true I am willing to be ostracised by all decent men and all decent women. If it is true then I want Dr. Sayre to cease practising medicine and go out of decent society. I stand ready to make good every assertion contained in my letter, which the HERALD printed on Sunday. If Dr. Sayre will bring a suit against me for libel I will go to New York and accept service, and have the trial take place there and not here. I shall be delighted if he will pursue such a course."

N.Y. Herald

Aug. 27.89

Dr. Hammond and Dr. Sayre.

The controversy which has broken out between Dr. William A. Hammond and Dr. Lewis A. Sayre is an unfortunate thing. It tends to lessen the faith of laymen in physicians to see two men so widely known engaged in a campaign of personal abuse that would disgrace an ordinary barroom.

If what Dr. Hammond says is true Dr. Sayre is not only unfit to practise medicine but is out of place among gentlemen.

On the other hand, if Dr. Hammond has spoken falsely he ought to be ostracised by decent men and women.

N.Y. Herald

Aug. 28.89

#### Two Doctors Make Some Very Curious Revelations.

The sharp controversy between Dr. Hammond as complainant and Dr. Sayre as defendant is not at all edifying.

This wordy battle has so far been waged in the language and with the passion of a slugging match. It would have been better to conduct it in the tongue in which prescriptions are written.

The medical profession is not honored by such exhibitions of ill temper. On the contrary, it is degraded, for a great proportion of readers will turn away with mingled disgust and distrust.

Popular distrust of physicians is a public misfortune. But if we believe half that these two gentlemen say of each other how can the community retain its confidence?

It is said that men tell the truth when they are mad. In the present instance indignation seems to have acted as an uncontrolled aperient and professional secrets are divulged in volcanic succession.

If the people should generalize from this controversy they would conclude that members of the medical profession lack the elements of harmony and fraternity. They appear to be possessed by a frenzied jealousy of each other. Pride in the skill or genius of a brother practitioner is seldom seen, and the competition for patients is so hot that the success of one rouses the fury of the others.

We should judge also from what Dr. Hammond and Dr. Sayre say that medical science is by no means an exact science, that physicians are apt to play the game of blind man's buff with diseases whose cause is not immediately apparent, and that experiment, with all the risks which the word implies, is to be found everywhere in the physician's practice.

If learned doctors who have had an experience of many years behind them admit this, is it strange that many families exhibit a tremulous distrust when a father or child is seriously ill?

The fatal admission of these gentlemen is that the doctor, like the detective, acts on clues. Sometimes he is fortunate, gets hold of the right clue and performs a miraculous cure. At other times he is unfortunate, misses the clue and jumbles about until the vitality of his patient is exhausted. The difference between the physician and the detective, then, is that in the one case the criminal who is hunted escapes safely to Canada, while in the other the victim finds his way to the grave.

But we take a more hopeful view of the matter than either Hammond or Sayre. Medical science may not be perfect, but it



is progressive. Its achievements are wonderful. Compared with the science of a century ago it has introduced a sort of millennium. Doctors do not know the whole, and sometimes they make frightful blunders, but the appliances of the profession in mechanical surgery, for example, excite the profoundest gratitude. The tortures of other days are unknown; the means of rapid cure are multiplied; skill and knowledge have phenomenally increased and specialists have come to be looked upon as miracle workers.

A large proportion of the public, however, will be seriously affected by the charges of Hammond and Sayre. The whole profession must suffer in consequence. A feeling gains ground that medicine is in many instances a risky resource, and people will thoughtlessly rush into novelties.

Indeed the mind curer and the Christian scientist are already competitors not to be despised. If the stories told of Dr. Hammond are true, these new comers have a wide and legitimate field in which to work. If the doctor thinks it well to disabuse a patient's mind by pretending to remove a piece of bone from his skull, and actually cures him by making him believe that a delicate operation has been performed, why should he execrate the man or woman as a charlatan who accomplishes the same result, but without the operation? If the one case is professional, why should the other be denounced as unprofessional?

The simple truth is that doctors are themselves responsible for both mind cure and Christian science, and if what Hammond says of Sayre and what Sayre says of Hammond is to be accepted these mind and faith physicians, who eschew medicine and make people well by persuading them that they are well, have a very important mission and should be encouraged.

We are sorry for this controversy, not merely because it is undignified, but because it does a serious injury to one of the noblest professions that ever drafted genius and skill into the service of humanity.









